Ecolab Watermark™ 2025 Study Finds Smarter Water Use Key to India's AI Future

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Ecolab, a global sustainability leader in water solutions and services, today announced the India findings from its third annual Ecolab Watermark™ Study, which explores how people perceive water challenges and the role of business in solving them. This year’s research connects water stewardship to one of the region’s fastest-growing industries, artificial intelligence (AI), revealing that while India leads global optimism on the promise of AI, awareness of its hidden water impact remains limited.

According to the Ecolab Watermark Study, awareness of AI’s resource demands is high in India, with 70% of consumers recognising its water footprint and 86% associating AI with high energy use. As AI-driven infrastructure, such as data centres and advanced manufacturing, expands across the country, expectations on business are rising in parallel. More than two-thirds of respondents in India believe water conservation and reuse are essential to long-term business growth. Nearly 64% of Indian consumers believe that water used to power AI is diverting resources and contributing to water scarcity for people. The findings underscore the need for the industry to embed water reuse, recycling and AI-enabled water management into the core of India’s growth strategy.

“*By 2050, the world will have nearly 30% more people and require 47% more energy. Water demand will continue to surge, yet by 2030, the world already faces a projected 56% water*

deficit," said **Christophe Beck, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer at Ecolab**. "*The AI boom is helping to shape this future, unleashing the potential for new business growth and transformative innovation. At the same time, every week a new data center opens, and every month a new fab comes online. While we can create more of the energy these facilities need, we cannot create more of our most vital resource – water. For India, where both industrial expansion and digital infrastructure are accelerating, water circularity must become a core business strategy*."

The study also finds strong public confidence in technology as part of the solution. Among IMEA respondents, about 82% agree with investing in such technologies and infrastructure to mitigate water impacts from climate change. "*Global consumers recognize smart water management is essential for a resilient future, and they expect businesses to lead with both transformative technologies and transparent action to make it a reality*," said **Emilio Tenuta, Chief Sustainability Officer at Ecolab**. "*Businesses have an opportunity to harness the power of AI and deliver impact-driven water solutions that meet the needs of local communities, while also driving innovation and business growth*."

According to the study, 76% of Indian consumers agree that governments are reducing, reusing, recycling, restoring and recovering water in their daily operations, while 71% say the same of businesses. Consumers overwhelmingly say that smart water management should be a top business priority, alongside energy efficiency and climate adaptation. Across geographies, belief is low -U.S. (43% and 42%), Europe (44% and 41%), Asia Pacific (48% and 48%) and Latin America (48% and 46%).

India's expanding digital economy, from data centres to electronics manufacturing, represents both a growth engine and

a stress test for water infrastructure. With industrial and energy demand set to surge, Ecolab's findings underscore the need for cross-sector collaboration to close the water reuse gap, which globally remains below 20% and under 10% in the microelectronics sector.

"*AI can make India's water systems intelligent. When every litre is measured, analysed, and reused, water stops being a constraint and becomes a competitive advantage. Water security isn't just an environmental goal, it's an economic imperative for India's next phase of growth*," said **Manish Khandelwal, Managing Director, Ecolab India**.

Ecolab is already partnering with industries across India to deploy AI-driven water management systems that reduce freshwater withdrawal, enable near-zero liquid discharge operations, and improve cooling tower efficiency. These technologies can help facilities achieve up to 40% lower water use per unit of output while maintaining reliability in water-stressed regions.

About the study
The 2025 Ecolab Watermark™ Study was conducted by Morning Consult, starting in March 2025 across fifteen countries, including India, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and South Africa. The India/IMEA sample represents urban and industrial consumers aware of sustainability issues. The online study included a selection of countries within each region to provide a global overview of water stewardship where it matters most.

For India-specific results, visit: www.watermark.ecolab.com/ecolab/2025country/india.
For Global results, visit: www.watermark.ecolab.com/ecolab.

About Ecolab

A trusted partner for millions of customers, Ecolab (NYSE:ECL) is a global sustainability leader offering water, hygiene and infection prevention solutions and services that protect people and the resources vital to life. Building on a century of innovation, Ecolab has annual sales of $16 billion, employs more than 48,000 associates, and operates in more than 170 countries worldwide. The company delivers comprehensive science-based solutions, data-driven insights and world-class service to advance food safety, maintain clean and safe environments and optimize water and energy use. Ecolab's innovative solutions improve operational efficiencies and sustainability for customers in the food, healthcare, life sciences, hospitality and industrial markets. www.ecolab.com.

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